

**PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENT AMENDMENTS**

2016 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Merrill F. Nelson**

Senate Sponsor: Ralph Okerlund

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This bill amends provisions relating to public utility easements.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

► provides that, under certain circumstances, a public utility shall provide notice after using a public utility easement.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

AMENDS:

**54-3-27**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2009, Chapter 245

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*Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

Section 1. Section **54-3-27** is amended to read:

**54-3-27. Public utility easement.**

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Protected utility easement" means a recorded easement or right-of-way:

(i) for the use and installation of a utility facility; and



(ii) the ownership of which a gas corporation, electric corporation, or telephone corporation acquires and holds by any lawful means.

(b) "Public utility easement" means the area on a recorded plat map or other recorded document that is dedicated to the use and installation of public utility facilities.

(2) ~~(a)~~ A public utility easement provides a public utility with:

~~(i)~~ (a) the right to install, maintain, operate, repair, remove, replace, or relocate public utility facilities; and

~~(i)~~ (b) the rights of ingress and egress within the public utility easement for public utility employees, contractors, and agents.

(3) (a) A public utility shall, no longer than 48 hours after the public utility disturbs the ground, low level vegetation, or personal property on property of a single family residence subject to a public utility easement, provide a written or electronic notice to the property owner or occupant, or leave written notice on the property, in accordance with Subsection (3)(b).

(b) The public utility shall:

(i) deliver the notice described in Subsection (3)(a) by mail, email, or in person; and

(ii) include, in the written or electronic notice described in Subsection (3)(a), the name, address, and phone number of the public utility described in Subsection (3)(a).

~~(b)~~ (4) (a) Notwithstanding Subsection ~~(3)~~ (4)(b), a public utility shall restore or repair, at the expense of the public utility, any fence, grass, soil, shrubbery, bushes, flowers, other low level vegetation, sprinkler system, irrigation system, gravel, flat concrete, or asphalt damaged or displaced from the exercise of the easement rights described in Subsection (2)~~(a)~~.

~~(3) Except as provided in Subsection (2)(b), if]~~

(b) If a property owner places improvements to land that interfere with the easement rights described in Subsection (2)~~(a)~~, the property owner shall bear the risk of loss or damage to those improvements resulting from the exercise of the easement rights described in Subsection (2)~~(a)~~.

~~(4)~~ (5) (a) Except as provided in Subsection ~~(4)~~ (5)(b), a public utility easement is nonexclusive and may be used by more than one public utility.

(b) Notwithstanding Subsection ~~(4)~~ (5)(a), a public utility may not:

(i) interfere with any facility of another public utility within the public utility easement;

or

59 (ii) infringe on the legally required distances of separation between public utility  
60 facilities required by federal, state, or local law.

61 [~~(5)~~] (6) A subdivision plat that includes a public utility easement may not be approved  
62 by a county or municipality unless the subdivider has provided the county or municipality proof  
63 that the subdivider has, as a courtesy, previously notified each public utility that is anticipated  
64 to provide service to the subdivision.

65 [~~(6)~~] (7) A person may not acquire, whether by adverse possession, prescription,  
66 acquiescence, or otherwise, any right, title, or interest in a public utility easement or protected  
67 utility easement that is adverse to or interferes with a public utility's full use of the easement for  
68 the purposes for which the easement was created.

69 [~~(7)~~] (8) A gas corporation's, electric corporation's, or telephone corporation's failure to  
70 possess, occupy, or use a protected utility easement does not diminish or extinguish any right  
71 that the gas corporation, electric corporation, or telephone corporation has under the easement.

72 [~~(8)~~] (9) Nothing in this section may be construed to affect the right of a condemnor to  
73 condemn a public utility easement as provided by law.

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**Legislative Review Note**  
**Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel**